

SKIT ACTIVITY: GROUP E

Read the following excerpt from the *Mencius*.

Mencius (370–290 B.C.E.)—one of the most famous Confucian scholars. He helped further Confucian teachings, in particular the notion that human beings are basically good.

discharge—perform (a duty)

Mencius said, “What is the most important duty? One’s duty towards one’s own parents. What is the most important thing to watch over? One’s own character. I have heard of a man who, not having allowed his character to be morally lost, is able to discharge his duties towards his parents; but I have not heard of one morally lost who is able to do so. There are many duties one should discharge, but the fulfillment of one’s duty towards one’s parents is the most basic.”¹²

1. Circle the statement that best matches the meaning of this excerpt. Check with your teacher once you have decided.
 - Every person has his/her place in society.
 - Duties to one’s parents are of utmost importance.
 - Promote those who are most able.
 - Human beings are naturally good.
 - There are proper ways to treat the elderly and the young.
 - When others do not treat you well, think of how you could improve yourself.
2. What do you think “duty towards one’s own parents” includes? Give examples.
3. Why do you think Mencius believes that duty towards one’s parents is the most important duty?
4. As a group, prepare a presentation of this excerpt. Your presentation should
 - have participation by all group members;
 - clearly portray the meaning behind this excerpt **in a modern-day context** (such as in a classroom, school, or a current event); and
 - be interesting and creative.